



Biddeford School Department **Received**

PO Box 1865 - 205 Main Street

Biddeford, Maine 04005

JUN 16 2008

SARAH-JANE POLI, Superintendent
TERRY GAUVIN, Business Manager

Maine Department of Education
JENNIFER PORTER, Assistant Superintendent
JACLYN ADAMS, Director of Special Education

June 13, 2008

Commissioner Susan Gendron
Maine Department of Education
State House Station #23
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: Revised Alternative Plan

Dear Commissioner Gendron:

Please accept this response to your letter of May 7, 2008. As you know, Biddeford has submitted an alternative plan because it currently serves more than 2,500 students.

Enclosed are the following requested documents and information:

- Alternative Plan Submittal Sheet
- Alternative Plan Cover Sheet
- Copy of your letter dated May 7, 2008
- Alternative Plan Re-Submittal Information dated June 12, 2008

Please contact me if you need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Sarah-Jane Poli".

Sarah-Jane Poli, Superintendent of Schools

Enc.

cc: Ray Hardy

SJP/dlp

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ALTERNATIVE PLAN SUBMITTAL SHEET

School Administrative Unit Submitting Alternative Plan:

- Biddeford - RSU 55

Contact Information:

Name: Sarah-Jane Poli, Superintendent

Address: 205 Main Street, PO Box 1865
Biddeford, ME 04005

Telephone: 282-8280

email: sjpoli@biddschools.org

Date Plan Submitted by SAU: 11/28/07

Date Plan Re-Submitted by SAU, with corrections and additions: 4/29/08, 6/12/08

The intent to submit an alternative plan has been approved by the Commissioner in the approval of the Notice of Intent?



YES



NO

(If NO, please explain.)

Alternative Plan Cover Sheet

(Please attach Alternative Plan as Exhibit A)

Plan Requirements				
Item	Complete	In Progress	Not Yet Started	Need Assistance ¹
Plan addresses how the SAU will reorganize administrative functions, duties and noninstructional personnel so that projected expenditures of RSU in fiscal 2008-2009 for the following areas will not have an adverse impact on the instructional program.				
system administration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
transportation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
special education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
facilities and maintenance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plan addresses how cost savings will be achieved in fiscal 2008-2009 for the above four areas.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parameters for Plan Development				
Enrollment meets requirements (2,500 except where circumstances justify an exception)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When viewed in conjunction with surrounding proposed units, may not result in one or more municipalities being denied the option to join an RSU	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Includes at least one publicly supported high school	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consistent with policies set forth in section 1451	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No displacement of teachers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No displacement of students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No closures of schools existing or operating during school year immediately preceding reorganization, except as permitted under section 1512	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collaborative Agreements				
	Yes	No		
Does your plan currently include information/documentation on collaborative agreements? <i>(not required, but encouraged)</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

¹ Please explain what assistance you need to complete this portion of your plan, and state from whom you need assistance, on the next page.

Actual number of students for which the SAU is fiscally responsible: 2,782

Exception	Exception Claimed in Plan	Documentation Provided? (Please attach as Exhibit B)	
		Yes	No
Geography	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demographics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Economics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Population Density	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Unique Circumstances	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Assistance Needs –

Please use this section to describe your needs for assistance and from whom you need assistance.

Law Reference/Required Element	Explanation of your assistance need	Assistance needed from whom?

BIDDEFORD SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

Alternative Plan Re-Submittal – June 12, 2008

System Administration

2007-2008 Budget	2008-2009 Budget	Projects Savings	Percent of Decrease
\$657,342	\$576,171	\$81,171	12.35%

The reductions are as follows:

1. Based on the new chart of accounts, the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum was transferred to Student and Staff Support Services (60%) and to Title IA (40%) \$112,043
 2. Based on the new chart of accounts, the Substitute Coordinator was transferred to Student and Staff Support Services \$7,988
 3. Decreased advertising funds \$2,500
- Total Reductions: \$122,531

The explanation for the increase in this account is as follows:

1. Salaries and benefits for existing administrative staff and central office personnel.
2. Contract fees for hiring of a negotiator (six contracts due in 2009).
3. Employment liability insurance.

The overall net savings to System Administration is \$81,171.

100% EPS Allocations 2008-2009	2008-2009 Budget	EPS Status
\$638,152	\$576,171	Below by \$61,981

Transportation

2007-2008 Budget	2008-2009 Budget	Projects Savings	Percent of Decrease
\$1,717,983	\$1,618,657	\$99,326	5.78%

The reductions are as follows:

1. Eliminated a bus aide \$24,000
 2. Eliminated a bus driver \$30,000
 3. Decreased private transportation \$25,000
 4. Based on new chart of accounts, transferred field trips, athletic and co-curricular to proper account codes \$148,366
- Total Reductions: \$227,966

The explanation for the increase in this account is as follows:

1. Gas prices have increased.
2. Electricity rates at the bus garage have gone up despite conservation and purchase of energy saving devices.
3. Salaries and benefits of existing staff have increased.

The overall net savings to Transportation is \$99,326.

BIDDEFORD SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

Alternative Plan Re-Submittal – June 12, 2008 (continued)

100% EPS Allocations 2008-2009	2008-2009 Budget	EPS Status
\$992,543	\$1,618,657	Above by \$626,114

This is due to the fact that the K-8 schools are not centrally located. Therefore, the majority of our K-8 students are bused.

Special Education

2007-2008 Budget	2008-2009 Budget	Projects Savings	Percent of Decrease
\$5,445,982	\$5,439,680	\$6,302	0.12%

The reductions are as follows:

1. Eliminated the special education department head	\$3,164
2. Eliminated a special education teacher	\$72,048
3. Eliminated 0.2 IEP Coordinator	\$29,610
4. Eliminated 0.45 administrative assistant	\$7,006
5. Eliminated two Ed Tech II's	\$51,000
6. Transferred two sign language interpreters to local entitlement	\$68,692
7. Decreased the purchase of supplies	\$9,382
8. Decreased Maine State Billing due to not receiving Medicaid Funds	\$51,000
Total Reductions:	\$256,702

The explanation for the increase in this account is as follows:

1. A full time IEP Coordinator will be hired.
2. A half time administrative assistant will be hired for the IEP Coordinator.
3. Contracted service and private tuition have increased.
4. Salaries and benefits of existing staff have increased.

The overall net savings to Special Education is \$6,302.

100% EPS Allocations 2008-2009	2008-2009 Budget	EPS Status
\$3,227,886	\$5,439,680	Above by \$2,211,794

There are 18.30% of Biddeford students that receive special education services. At this time, more state funds are needed for this area. Biddeford will pilot the Response to Intervention Program with the kindergarten students next fall. Hopefully, this will help to reduce costs over a period of time.

BIDDEFORD SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

Alternative Plan Re-Submittal – June 12, 2008 (continued)

Facilities and Maintenance

2007-2008 Budget	2008-2009 Budget	Projects Savings	Percent of Decrease
\$3,387,595	\$3,195,520	\$192,075	5.67%

The reductions are as follows:

1. Eliminated contracted janitorial services	\$43,361
2. Eliminated two school resource officers	\$76,092
3. Decreased architectural fees	\$41,610
4. Decreased repairs and maintenance	\$16,864
5. Decreased major capital projects	\$75,700
6. Decreased capital improvement note payments	\$38,944
Total Reductions:	\$292,571

The explanation for the increase in this account is as follows:

1. Major increase in electricity, sewer and heating oil.
2. Increase in contracted services, such as snow plowing, facility management, etc.
3. Increase in salaries and benefits of existing maintenance and new custodial staff.

The overall net saving for Facilities and Maintenance is \$192,075

100% EPS Allocations 2008-2009	2008-2009 Budget	EPS Status
\$3,104,029	\$3,195,520	Above by \$91,491

Clarification of savings of \$572,931 listed on pages 12 and 13 of Biddeford's March 26, 2008, submission plan:

This figure is the result of comparing our in-house costs vs. contracted service fees for three areas: professional development, Functional Life Skills Program and office space for Special Education Director and administrative staff. The comparative study revealed that it is cheaper for Biddeford to provide its own service than to contract service. In other words, our budget for special education could be \$572,931 higher if the above services were not done in-house.

The Biddeford School Department is working with Education 2020 Collaborative to find ways to share services and resources in order to further reduce special education costs in the future.



JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
23 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0023

SUSAN A. GENDRON
COMMISSIONER

May 7, 2008

Sarah-Jane Poli, Superintendent
Biddeford School Department
PO Box 1865
Biddeford, ME 04005

Dear Superintendent Poli:

Thank you for the revised Alternative Plan that you submitted on behalf of Biddeford School Department on April 29, 2008 for Department review for compliance with the school reorganization law, P.L. 2007, chapter 240, Part XXXX.

I recognize how much time, effort and thoughtful work is required to complete an alternative plan and appreciate the efforts made, to date, by all those involved.

Members of my staff and I have reviewed the submission and offer the comments and notes listed below to assist you in completing the plan. If you make any substantive change(s) to any part of the plan beyond those listed below, please be sure to note those on the Updated Alternative Plan Cover Sheet Checklist, along with notation of those items that have changed per the notes contained in this response.

General Documentation (Submittal Sheet)

- All information submitted as required.

Checklist/Plan Text Items

Items Checked "Complete"

With respect to the items you checked as "complete", please note the following:

** Required Items*

Each alternative plan must provide detailed projected expenditures and cost savings in FY 2008-2009 for system administration, transportation, special education, and facilities and maintenance in accordance with P.L. 2007, chapter 240, Part XXXX-36(6)(F). When providing these projected expenditures and cost

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savings, you may want to consider using the guidance offered in the Drummond Woodsum workshop materials. As noted in my April 11, 2008 correspondence, if you have questions concerning this requirement, please email Karla Miller or Suzan Beaudoin at karla.miller@maine.gov or suzan.beaudoin@maine.gov for their assistance.

In Exhibit A, we have included a comparison of (A) the 2007-08 EPS allocations for the four categories of system administration, transportation, special education, and facilities and maintenance and (B) your unit's 2007-08 budget information as reported to the MDOE MEDMS Financials for these four categories. The actual allocations for FY 09 are also included. I encourage you to review this information.

Also included are the data reported to the MDOE MEDMS Special Education. Please clarify how the savings of \$572,931 were calculated as the reports of personnel do not show a substantial reduction in personnel as you have indicated in the "Present Cost Savings" column of the Cost Savings for Required Areas chart on pages 12 and 13 of your March 26, 2008 submission.

We will review all items on the checklist again, upon your completion of the plan.

SUBMISSION OF REVISIONS:

Please provide the additional materials to complete your plan by June 13, 2008. Please include:

- Any additional data required
- An updated Submittal Page
- An updated Cover Sheet Checklist
- A copy of this Response from the Commissioner.

I will respond no more than 14 days after the revisions/additional materials are refiled with the Department. As you are the contact person identified on the Submittal Sheet, this response is addressed to you but with the understanding that you will share it with your school administrative unit board members.

Finally, what I am reviewing for approval is a plan (or a submission, if the plan is incomplete) which is by its very nature prospective, with steps yet to be taken or finalized; and any review comments or approval given are in relation to the elements required under P.L. 2007, chapter 240, Part XXXX but not the legality of all the activities proposed. Thus, I strongly recommend that you have your own legal advisor(s) review the details of any particular transaction proposed in your plan (particularly with respect to the disposition of property, to debt, and to employee contracts/relations) as you proceed, to ensure the legality of the steps you'll be taking to implement the plan. If that review

leads to any substantive changes in any parts of your plan, please be sure to submit an amended plan to the Department for our review and our file.

Again, my sincere thanks for your efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Susan A. Gendron". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Susan" being more prominent.

Susan A. Gendron
Commissioner of Education

cc: Ray Hardy, Facilitator

Enc.